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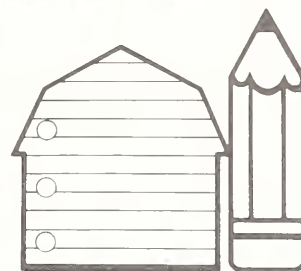
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# Ag in the Classroom

## Notes

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

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## It's Time to Investigate "The Case of the Sneaky Snack"

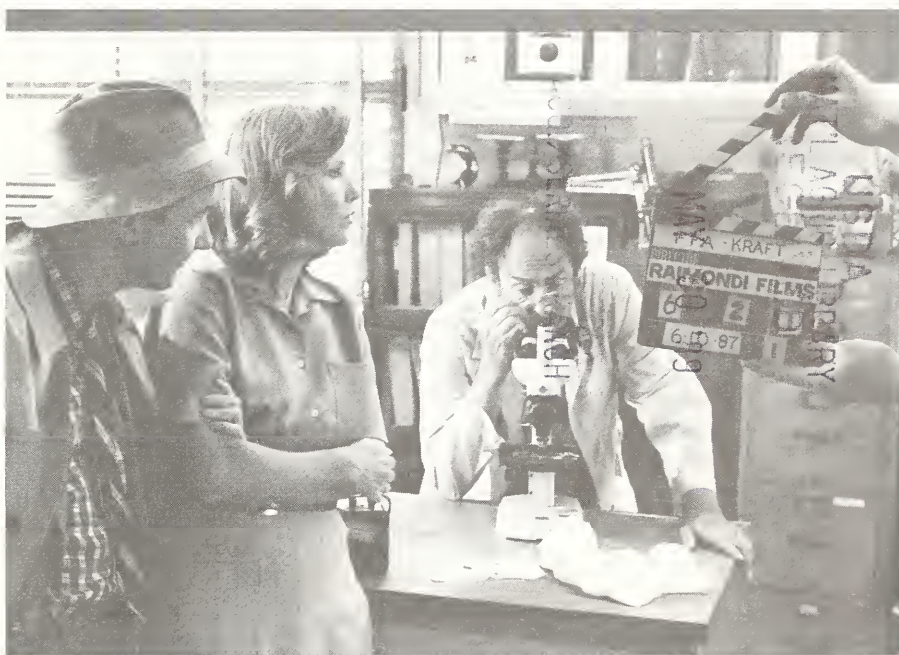
"The Case of the Sneaky Snack" sounds like something that creeps up on you after a winter of too many munchies and too little exercise, but it's not. Despite its ominous title, the tongue-in-cheek detective yarn spins a tale about good nutrition.

Sponsored by Kraft, Inc., for the FFA's "Food for America" program, the 11-minute detective spoof opens at Bobby's house, where Bobby's mother has called in detectives to find her missing son. After gathering some edible clues in the kitchen, the two gumshoes take their evidence to the laboratory of Dr. Freund.

Dr. Freund examines each morsel of Bobby's after-school snack, and gives everyone a lesson about the food and fiber system.

"It's going like hotcakes!" exclaims Jeri Mattics, FFA's program coordinator for information. She says that over 100 copies have been sold since the film was released for sale in February, and rentals have been equally brisk.

Although "The Case of the Sneaky Snack" was shot largely at USDA's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Maryland, the film concludes at The Land exhibit in Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida. In this scene, Kraft President Mike Miles discusses agricultural career opportunities.



"The Case of the Sneaky Snack" is available for free loan through Venard Films, Ltd., (309-699-3911) or for purchase through the National FFA Supply Service, (703-780-5600).

Dr. Freund examines the evidence in a scene from "The Case of the Sneaky Snack." The film is sponsored by Kraft, Inc., for FFA's "Food for America Program."

## Idaho Students Learn Ag Is No "Hee Haw" Matter

If you're going to teach about potatoes and corn, there's nothing like a musical parody to make students all "eyes and ears."

Just ask the fourth grade teachers of Meridian, Idaho's Mary McPherson Elementary School. Ninety of their students recently presented "Agriculture in Idaho is No 'Hee Haw' Matter," at the Western Region Ag in the Classroom Convention

in Boise, Idaho.

As conference attendees dined on delicious Idaho trout, they took in an entertaining, but fact-filled spoof of the T.V. show "Hee Haw." With Roy "Clarkson" as the emcee, the show's theme centered around pride in Idaho's crops and industries, care of the soil and ag-related occupations.

*continued on page 2*



## From the Director

Dear Readers,

*Whenever I receive letters from teachers, I am always reminded how lucky they are to interact with children on a daily basis. Nothing can be more refreshing, or more joyful, than to have a "front row seat" to a child's mind.*

*On that note, I would like to share with you something a teacher sent to me. After 29 years of teaching about agriculture, he collected some of his students' most interesting remarks on the subject:*

*"Dwarf plants were developed by Gregor Mendel, who first lowered the bloom."*

*"The Indians taught the Pilgrims a lot of neat plants to grow. They were the first good Samericans."*

*"Wheat chaff is so light and flighty it is really not good for anything but being wheat chaff."*

*"Chlorophyll is something plants have to make them smell really nice to other plants."*

*"While most cows can only give milk, cows in Wisconsin have learned how to give dairy products."*

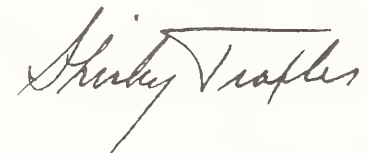
*"Actually, cotton seeds give us cotton but bird seeds don't give us birds."*

And finally,

*"Seeds should be buried whether they are dead or not."*

*Can you top these? If so, I invite you to share your collection with us!*

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler

## "Hee Haw"

*continued from page 1*

According to fourth grade teacher Jeanie Blatner, one of the show's "directors," every student who wanted a speaking part or solo had a chance to participate in some part of the musical. "The

knowledge gained from combining agricultural facts with words and music will be with these students for a long time to come," she said.

Students began the performance singing "This Land is Your Land." Roy "Clarkson" then introduced the headlining guests, Mr. "Megga Bucks," "Miss Sunshine" and three Idaho "farmers." They

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A "lonely little petunia" in a potato field sings of her woes during the production of "Agriculture in Idaho is No 'Hee Haw' Matter." The musical was performed by Meridian, Idaho, fourth graders at the Western Region Ag in the Classroom Convention in Boise.



# Spotlight

## Ag-ed No Small Potatoes to Idaho Teacher

Teaching children about agriculture is second nature to fourth-grade teacher Jeanie Blattner of Meridian, Idaho.

"I have always had an interest in agriculture. I was born and raised on a dairy farm, where I drove a tractor, took care of chickens, and helped with the usual farm chores," Blattner recalls.

Although she no longer drives a tractor, part of Blattner's heart has always been back on the farm. The other part has always been in the classroom.

Enter Ag in the Classroom—the perfect match for Blattner's interests. "I first became involved in the Ag in the Classroom program when I got a call in 1986 from Dr. Doug Pals of the University of Idaho. He asked if I would help plan a curriculum for Idaho AITC. I thought it sounded ideal, since I had an interest in agriculture and education," Blattner explains.

Since that phone call, Blattner has spared no energy for AITC. In addition to planning her school's fourth grade "hit" musical, "Agriculture in Idaho is No 'Hee Haw' Matter" (see cover), the teacher continues to contribute to her state's program. Along with her mother Maxine Stewart, a retired teacher, Blattner has written AITC lesson plans and co-authored an Idaho history activity book for fourth graders. "Many teachers throughout the state are using the activity book to supplement their Idaho history curriculum," she notes.

Blattner has even tied ag-ed into her master's degree thesis. "I piloted five Ag in the Classroom

units throughout the state, and I gave these units to teachers with and without agricultural backgrounds. Both groups of teachers pre-tested and post-tested their students on the Ag in the Classroom subject matter, and I have been collecting and analyzing the data from these tests."

Blattner says the pre-test, post-test results are quite interesting. "It seems that teachers with or without any agricultural background or experience

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**"Agriculture should not be viewed as just one more thing that has to be taught."**

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could pick out any unit in Idaho Ag in the Classroom curriculum and do an effective job of teaching."

On that encouraging note, Blattner reminds teachers, "Agriculture should not be viewed as just one more thing that has to be taught. Ag in the Classroom units are designed to incorporate language, math, history and social studies. It's a good way to teach students where their food and fiber comes from."



Jeanie Blattner

*continued from page 2*

reported on the business of production, processing, distribution and retailing of commodities. "Miss Trivia" spiced up the show by sharing farm facts and jokes with the other children.

Idaho's top 10 products were introduced when the students held charts and wore costumes with their shining faces poking through the centers. Some children portrayed and sang "I'm a Lonely Little Petunia" in an onion patch, a cornfield, hay field, sugar beet field and potato field.

The performers sang about the trials and rewards of farming with verses about bill collectors, repair jobs, and the care of farm animals. "A Farmer's Many Hats" addressed the varied occupations a farmer must hold to keep the farm going: meteorologist, veterinarian, mechanic, engineer, business manager, chef and scientist. Other songs paid tribute to the many ag-related occupations and issues.



Blattner noted that the Ag in the Classroom program came in handy for this production. "Many of the agricultural facts we covered in the musical were directly out of Idaho's Ag in the Classroom 4th grade curriculum guide."

The show came to a close when the students sang the song "Rumors" adapted from "Hee Haw," and Lee Greenwood's, "God Bless the U.S.A."

Blattner's students enjoy putting agricultural issues in the spotlight.



## The Agricultural Hall of Fame: A Great Way to Cultivate Ag History

If movie stars can have a "walk of fame" in Hollywood, America's farmers certainly deserve their own "hall of fame." And they have one—right at the center of our nation's heartland in Bonner Springs, Kansas.

It's no surprise that the Agricultural Hall of Fame has become a popular resource for Midwestern teachers. Drawing 15,000 students a year, the hall's Museum of Farming displays more agricultural relics than Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian museums. At the farming museum, students can see and touch historic ag items like President Harry S Truman's walking plow, the first farm truck—a 1903 Dart, steam threshing engines, an 1866 wooden sausage grinder, a 1781 Indian plow and a two-man corn planter.

A federally chartered educational institution, the Agricultural Hall of Fame and National Center was dedicated in 1960 as the official living memorial to agriculture. Its 270 acre site includes the National Farmers Memorial, a "Farm Town, U.S.A." area, the National Gallery of Rural Art, and a one-mile nature trail.

Center Director Harold Adkins says a visit to the national agricultural shrine is a true learning experience for students of all ages. "We reserve tours for students from pre-school through high school, and we adjust the tour's content according to age. Our purpose is to expose visitors to a total rural living orientation.

"We begin each tour with a 15-minute film on the history of farming. Upon teachers' requests, we can also show films on subjects like the future of farming, how cows produce milk, and the story of peanuts. Students then visit the 'touch museum'

and all the center's attractions."

"The highlight of the tour, though, is when children visit the one-room school, complete with a volunteer one-room school teacher!" Adkins notes.

Adkins says most of the volunteer tour guides are retired farmers who see a strong need for ag education. "Our goal is to teach the children about agriculture—its past, present and future. The prevailing attitude of many of our visiting students is that all food comes from the grocery store. The feeling we get here is that we'd like to have the children stay for a month instead of a day! We'd like to teach them about everything from food production to the conservation of our resources."

According to Adkins, attractions like the Ag Hall of Fame are only a part of the solution. "I consider our hall a great resource, but the most important thing is to get the teachers motivated. We have excellent teachers visit us every day—they're our strongest supporters. The word has to spread more, though, and I'm glad to see that the Ag in the Classroom program is keeping up the momentum!"

Midwestern teachers interested in arranging tours can write Agricultural Hall of Fame, 630 North 126th Street, Bonner Springs, Kansas 66012, or call 913-721-1075.

For teachers who are more than a quick bus trip away from Kansas, Adkins suggests looking into local agricultural attractions. "Agrirama in Tifton, Georgia, and Living History Farms in Des Moines, Iowa, are good examples of the class trip options that are out there. Also, many farmers welcome class farm tours. You just have to seek out the opportunities."



Visiting students see and touch historic ag items at the Agricultural Hall of Fame's Museum of Farming.



# State Bird Lands on Rhode Island's New AITC Logo

MAY/JUNE 1988



Rhode Island students proudly display their winning designs. From left to right, State Representative Leona Kelley (R), logo winner Joshua Maziarz, Lt. Governor Richard Licht (D), logo winner Gregory Marchetti and Rhode Island AITC Chairperson Carol Stamp.

The Rhode Island Red Rooster will find its new perch atop AITC stationery and other materials, thanks to two creative young artists who tied for first place in the Rhode Island Ag in the Classroom's Logo Contest.

Greg Marchetti of Narragansett Elementary School designed a poster showing a pencil writing out Ag in the Classroom. Joshua Maziarz of Barrington Christian Academy School depicted farm animals and vegetables sitting in a classroom. "We liked them both, so we decided to combine them," says Al Bettencourt, member of the Rhode

Island Ag in the Classroom committee.

The new logo features the state bird writing out "Ag in the Classroom" with a pencil.

The AITC Committee chose the two posters from over 40 entries. The contest winners were presented \$50 savings bonds by Lt. Governor Richard Licht at a ceremony at the Rhode Island State House on January 14. Governor DiPrete had declared the week of January 11 Rhode Island Ag in the Classroom Week.

Bettencourt says that the red and white logo is expected to debut within the month.



Rhode Island Ag in the Classroom's new Red Rooster logo combines the ideas of two of the state's budding artists.



## Fruit for Thought

Say goodbye to lemonade stands. A new computer program by Sunkist Growers, Inc. is now showing young entrepreneurs what big business is all about, and squeezing lemons on the corner may never be the same.

"Business with a Twist" is a unique computer game for 6th to 10th graders that gives students an understanding of the citrus industry from the grove to the breakfast table. From picking the fruits to packaging, promoting, exporting and consuming, the program literally puts a multi-million dollar business at students' fingertips.

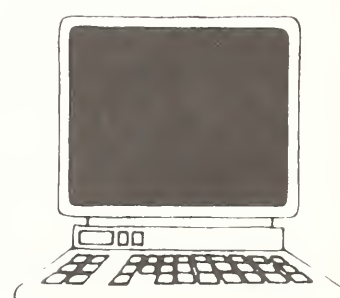
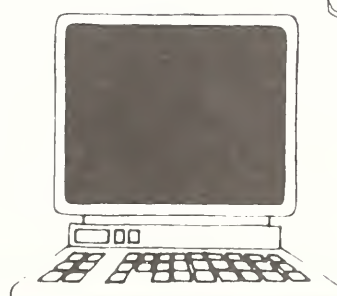
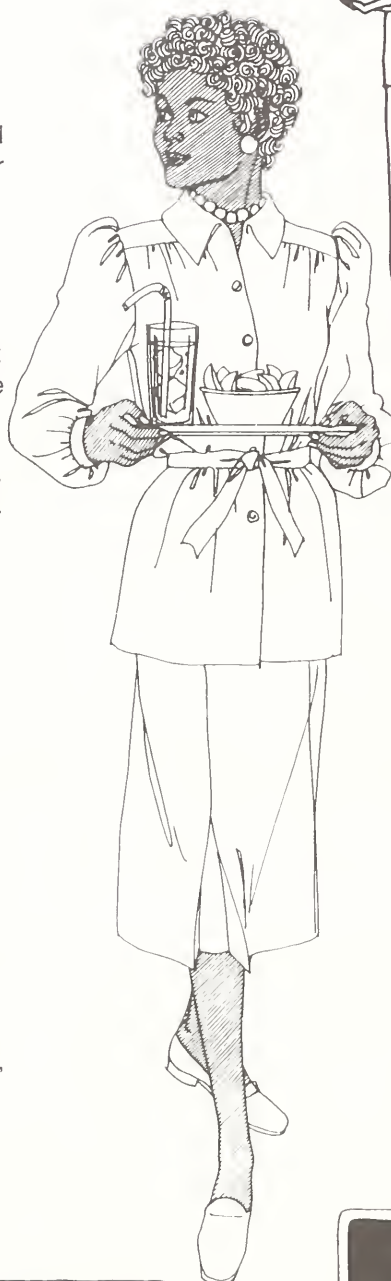
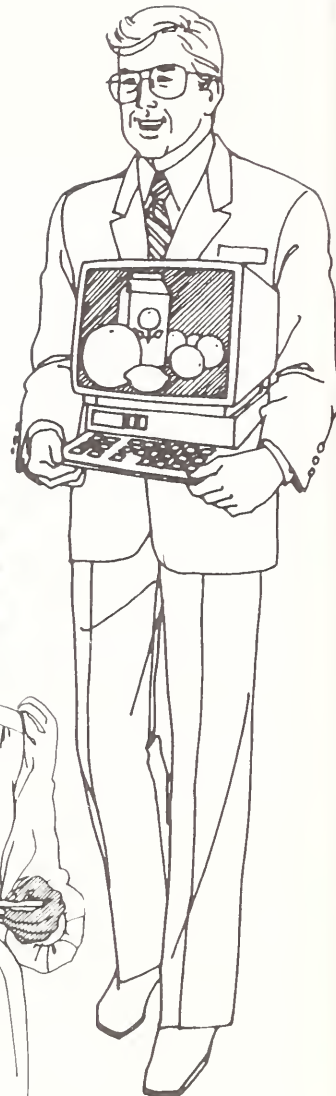
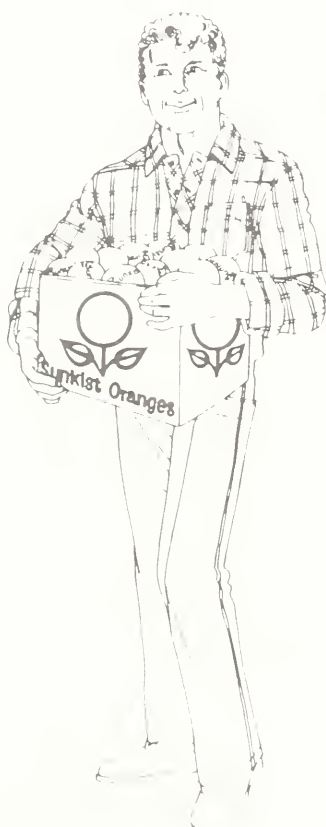
"We're just trying to broaden the appreciation of agriculture in general," says Cindy Maynard, editorial publicist in Sunkist's Consumer Affairs Division. Maynard says that "Business with a Twist" is the latest in a series of materials produced by the Sunkist Growers for use in the schools. "Our goal is to try and get more agriculture in the classroom," she explained.

Each game is designed to complement the existing classroom curriculum. For example, when playing "The Growers Game," students learn new math concepts by using spreadsheets to document crop gains and losses. "The Marketing Cooperative Game" turns English class into a corporate board room, where young executives write memos and conduct meetings. Social studies students become international marketeers in "The International Business Game," and with "The Good Eating Game," students learn nutritional concepts and the importance of consumer information in home economics class.

There are seven games in all, each one exploring a different area of the citrus industry. The package is compatible with the Apple computer system, and comes complete with floppy discs, activity sheets, a teacher's guide, and booklets on good nutrition, exercise, and of course, Vitamin C.

Originally pilot-tested in Arizona, "Business with a Twist" has become a popular resource in many other states. "Comments are just excellent from teachers across the country," says Maynard. The software package was created by an advisory board which included a science teacher, a social studies teacher and a computer coordinator.

For more information on "Business with a Twist," contact the Sunkist Growers, Inc., Consumer Services, Department 9200, P.O. Box 7888, Van Nuys, California, 91409-7888.





Where are most of our nation's soybean farms located? What is the national milk cow inventory? How many pounds of sunflower seeds can we harvest per year? Did cotton production increase or decrease between 1978 and 1982?

High school students across the nation have been finding the answers to these and other questions with a new lesson plan book, "The Census of Agriculture," produced by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census Agriculture Division.

The only comprehensive overview of U.S. agriculture at the national, state and county level, the census gathers data on crop and livestock production and other ag-related activities. It contains essential facts and figures on land use, farm and ranch classifications and farm machinery, plus demographic profiles of agricultural operators.

With all this vital information at its disposal, the Bureau of the Census Agriculture Division decided to reach out to students and share the data in a four-part lesson plan booklet. So far, 8,500 plans have been distributed to teachers through Future Farmers of America.

Consisting of comparative charts, detailed maps and related activities, the lessons are designed to review the important uses of agriculture census data. Each plan book includes a set of transparencies to enhance classroom instruction.

The major topics covered in the lesson plan booklet are production agriculture, agribusiness, community development and social studies. Students who follow the lessons will learn how they can use statistics comfortably to help solve business, marketing and policy problems.

According to Cyndi Shipley, public affairs coordinator for the census of agriculture, the plans can be applied to a variety of subjects. "These lessons are not just for vocational classes. They can be used in social studies, science, math or statistics and geography classes."

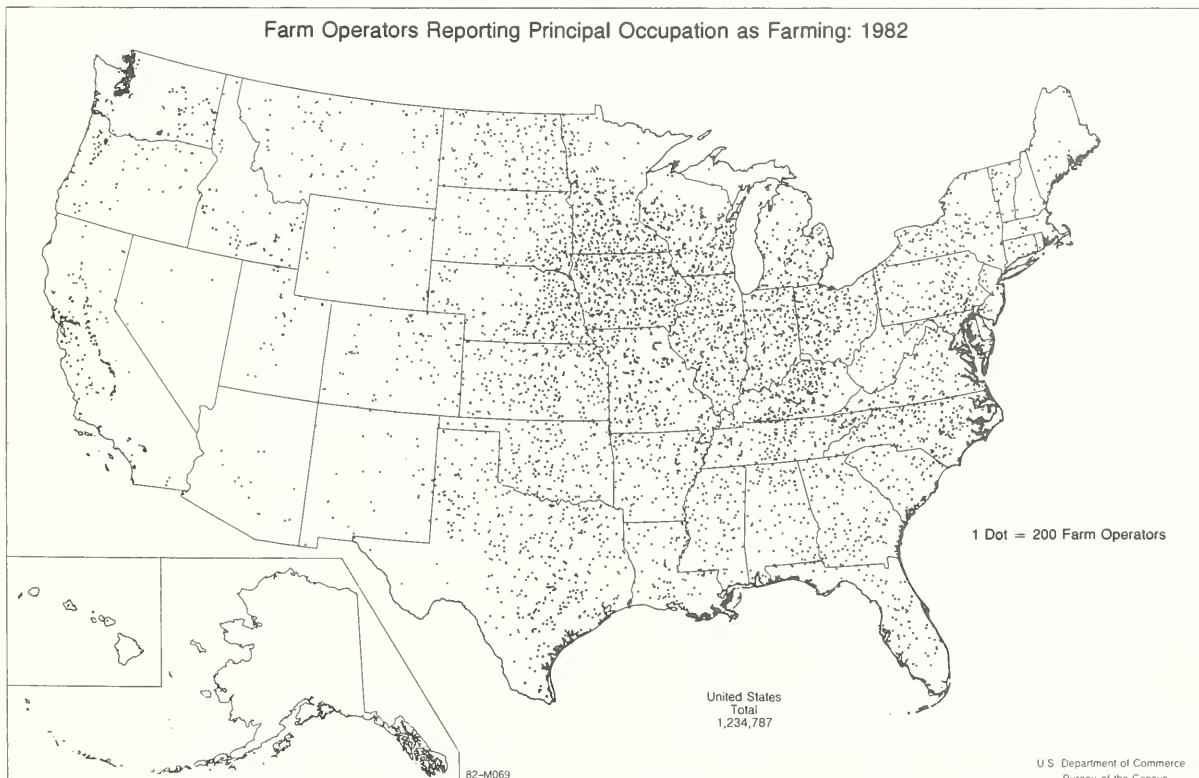
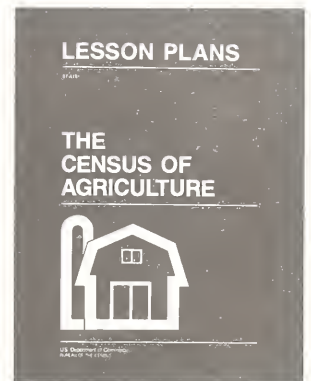
Shipley said the Bureau of the Census is excited about the idea of teachers and students using census data as a learning tool. "We recognized the need for students to understand the importance of both the census and agriculture. This was an ideal opportunity for us to give something back. We want our data to be used, and this learning format will expose students to the many agricultural career opportunities that are out there," she explained.

Although the lesson plans are geared to high school students, Shipley encourages teachers of lower grades to order the booklet. These teachers can tailor the lesson plans for their students and use some of the maps, she noted. "We're looking for ideas and comments from middle and elementary school teachers. One day we may be able to create a lesson plan specifically for younger students, too."

To order your free census of agriculture lesson plan booklet, write Lesson Plans, Agriculture Division, Room 436, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20233.

(Right) The Census of Agriculture Lesson Plan Book gives high school students a comprehensive overview of U.S. agriculture.

(Below) A sample of the many reference maps included in the new lesson plan book.



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The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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Ag in the Classroom Notes  
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